

Fear



Brian L. Renfro

Last month, the USPS Board of Governors (BOG) announced its pick for the 76th postmaster general. The BOG selected David Steiner, who most recently served on FedEx's board, to lead the agency. The BOG plucked Steiner straight from the private sector at one of the Postal Service's top competitors, presenting a clear conflict of interest. Before his time on FedEx's board, Steiner served as the CEO of Waste Management, Inc. His career there was highly concerning at best, as he was known for union-busting, slashing jobs and replacing workers with machines.

Why would the BOG hand the public Postal Service, one of the country's largest unionized employers, to an anti-union leader from a top competitor with a conflict of interest? Fear. Plain and simple.

The BOG's decision is a clear failure in its responsibility to do what is best for USPS. And it's a decision that was made in fear. Fear of the members' own jobs and the future of the BOG, and most notably, fear of going against the administration's wishes.

Private shippers have wanted to get USPS out of parcel delivery for years. These corporations have President Trump's ear, and the administration wants to hand them an invitation to overhaul the Postal Service. Rather than doing what was brave and best for the future of the public USPS, the BOG caved and made a decision in haste and out of fear.

Unfortunately, given the current circumstances, fear is likely a feeling that resonates with many of our members. Fear for the future of our jobs and retirements. Fear for the future of the public Postal Service. Fear for the future of our universal network. These are all understandable, real concerns facing letter carriers every day, but how we address this fear is critical.

All those attacking us and instilling this fear want only one thing: to bring us down. Whether it's the attacks on our retirement benefits, efforts to privatize USPS, or moves to get the agency out of package delivery, those pushing these agendas want to divide us.

That's why at this vital moment we cannot allow our enemies to sow division in the NALC. Division only breeds anger, lies and misinformation. Instead, we should do ev-

everything possible to show our strength by uniting to fend off the existential threats we face.

When we are divided, there's no question about it, we are weak. I travel across the country nearly every week to meet with our members, and one thing is certain: NALC members aren't weak. We've seen this illustrated just last month, when thousands of letter carriers performed double duty by collecting donations in the largest one-day food drive in the nation. When letter carriers come together, there's no stopping us. So, in these uncertain and unprecedented times, it's time to put everything else aside and show our united strength.

In February, when the administration threatened to release an executive order that would dismantle the Postal Service as we know it, within weeks, NALC members united and hosted more than 275 rallies across the country to say "Hell no!"

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Last month, when the House was debating cuts to letter carriers' retirement benefits, thousands of our members used NALC's Legislative Action Center to contact their representatives, demanding opposition. Thanks to our members' collective efforts and unified message, two harmful provisions were removed from the final bill that passed in the House. We succeeded in getting them to shelve increasing employees' Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) contributions and recalculating retirees' annuities based on their high-5 salary average (instead of high-3). However, elimination of the FERS Special Annuity Supplement, a critical retirement benefit for letter carriers, was included, so the fight is far from over.

As the reconciliation process heads to the Senate, it's time to activate ourselves and make sure that every senator hears our voice loud and clear. We saw progress in the House, and it's time to finish the job in the Senate.

Whatever the circumstances, we must remember the value of our united strength. We can't succumb to fear. Fear can motivate and drive us, but we must stay focused, stay united, face it head-on, and fight like hell together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian L. Renfro".